DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 437 356 SP 038 939

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TITLE An Experimental Investigation of Teacher Attraction to School Council Service.
PUB DATE 1999-04-23
NOTE 25p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association (Montreal, Quebec, Canada, April 19-23, 1999).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Administrator Role; Elementary Secondary Education; *Instructional Leadership; Principals; Teacher Administrator Relationship; *Teacher Attitudes; *Teacher Role; Teachers
IDENTIFIERS *Job Characteristics; *School Councils

ABSTRACT

This research examined teacher attraction to school council service. Public school teachers rated content-validated job descriptions for positions of school council member. The study design was a 2x2x3 analysis of variance. The independent variables were school council job attributes (instructional leadership or management); the role of the principal on the council (chair or member with a teacher as chair); and teacher school level (elementary school, middle school, or high school). The dependent variable was teacher reaction to school council job. Statistical testing detected a two-way interaction between job attributes and principal role on the council. When a teacher chaired the council, there was no variance in teacher ratings of the job. When a principal chaired the council, teachers rated the job with instructional leadership job attributes more favorably than the job with management job attributes. The study results have implications for job attraction theory and for recruiting teachers to leadership roles. (Contains 22 references.) (Author/SM)

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ED 437 356

Running head: AN EXPERIMENTAL INVESTIGATION OF TEACHER

An Experimental Investigation of Teacher Attraction to School Council Service

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Newton, R. M., & Winter, P. A. (1999, April). An experimental investigation of teacher attraction to school council service. Paper presented at the American Educational Research Association (AERA), Montreal, Canada.

SP038939

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ABSTRACT

This research examined teacher attraction to school council service. Experienced teachers (N = 168) rated content-validated job descriptions for the position of school council member. The study design was 2 x 2 x 3 analysis of variance (ANOVA). The independent variables were school council job attributes (instructional leadership, management), the role of the principal on the council (chair, member with a teacher as chair), and teacher school level (elementary school, middle school, high school). The dependent variable was teacher reaction to a school council job. Statistical testing detected a two-way interaction between job attributes and principal role on the council [F (1, 156) = 4.16, $p < .05$)]. When a teacher chaired the council, there was no variance in teacher ratings of the job. When a principal chaired the council, teachers rated the job with instructional leadership job attributes more favorably than the job with management job attributes. The study results have implications for job attraction theory and for recruiting teachers to leadership roles.

An Experimental Investigation of Teacher Attraction to School Council Service

Since the publication of A Nation at Risk (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983), educators, business leaders, and government officials have grappled with the challenges of school reform. Many reform programs incorporate one or more of the four restructuring strategies articulated in three national reports published in 1986: A Nation Prepared: Teachers for the Twenty-First Century (Carnegie Forum on Education and the Economy), Time for Results: The Governors' Report on Education (National Governors' Association), and Tomorrow's Teachers (Holmes Group). The four strategies (Murphy, 1991) are: (a) site-based management, (b) teaching for understanding, (c) professionalizing teaching, and (d) parent and student school choice. This study focused on the first of these strategies: site-based management.

The school reform program in Kentucky includes a comprehensive attempt to implement the site-based management concept. In 1989 the Kentucky Supreme Court declared the state's school system unconstitutional. State legislators responded by passing the Kentucky Education Reform Act of 1990 (KERA) which mandated school-based decision making (SBDM) through the creation of local school councils (David, 1994). Council members have the authority to participate in administrative decisions in eight areas: curriculum, staff time assignment, student assignment, student assignment to classes and programs, scheduling, space utilization, planning and resolution of instructional issues, discipline and classroom management, and extracurricular programs (Kentucky Education Reform Act, 1990).

Council membership consists of three teachers, two parents, and the school principal or a multiple of this configuration. Teachers voluntarily pursue the job of school council member by participating in an election process conducted, most often, by other teachers. Although the principal usually serves as council chair, there is a legal provision allowing principals to serve as a member of the council

with another council member serving as chair. Since 1993, teachers have served both as school council members and chairs.

This study addressed teacher attraction to the job of school council member via a simulated job attraction experiment. A random sample of experienced public school teachers participated in a job attraction experiment. Participants evaluated and reacted to content-validated job descriptions reflecting the legally-mandated school council job duties as specified by Kentucky Revised Statute (K.R.S.) § 160.345 (1990).

STUDY IMPORTANCE

Attracting sufficient numbers of capable and motivated teacher leaders to school council service is an issue of vital importance for schools undergoing restructuring according the SBDM model. Teacher members of school councils have the legal authority to participate in making administrative decisions and formulate policies impacting the delivery of educational programs. Teacher involvement in school-based decision making is purported to increase motivation to implement decisions that are made (Smylie, 1992) and to improve school performance (Wohlstetter, Smyer, & Mohrman, 1994).

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The theoretical framework used to develop research hypotheses was a job attraction model formulated by Rynes and Barber (1990) who specify strategies for attracting qualified applicants to fill vacant positions. Four propositions from the Rynes and Barber (1990) model undergirded the present research: (a) formal job attributes affect individual attraction to the job; (b) organizational characteristics impact individual attraction to the job; (c) personal characteristics of the job candidate influence individual attraction to the job; and (d) job message content of recruitment media (e.g., position advertisements, job descriptions) affects individual attraction to the job.

Educational researchers (Winter, 1996; Young, Place, Rinehart, Jury, & Baits, 1997) have used the Rynes and Barber (1990) model to frame empirical

investigations of teacher reactions to external recruitment practices for vacant teaching positions. The present research represents an initial use of the Rynes and Barber (1990) model in an internal job attraction context. Internal job attraction is the process of stimulating individuals who already hold jobs within the organization to pursue other positions within the organization (Heneman, Heneman, & Judge, 1997). The present research focus was attracting individuals who already hold teaching positions in the school to another position (school council member) within the same school. The study investigated whether job attributes (management, instructional leadership), an organizational characteristic (principal role on the school council), and a job candidate characteristic (school level of the participating teachers) influence teacher attraction to the job of school council member as depicted in a formal job description.

Use of the Rynes and Barber (1990) model was appropriate in the present research. Empirical investigations have shown that job attributes and organizational characteristics communicated to job applicants via external recruitment practices (e.g., position advertisements) influence individual attraction to the job (Rynes, 1991; Rynes, Heneman, & Schwab, 1980). As is the case with external job attraction, teachers make a voluntary decision to pursue the job of school council member. Also, school council jobs examined in this study have formal status within the organization hierarchy and duties specified by school reform legislation. It is reasonable to hypothesize that job attributes, an organizational characteristic, and a job candidate characteristic will impact teacher attraction to internal jobs as well as teacher attraction to external jobs.

RELATED LITERATURE

Private sector researchers have expended considerable effort to identify job factors that employers may use in recruitment messages designed to attract job applicants. In a study examining whether organization characteristics influence teacher job attraction, elementary education majors rated 72 hypothetical job descriptions and indicated whether they would pursue the job (Rynes & Lawler,

1983). Organizational factors (i.e., geographical location, type of school) and the interaction between them were important factors influencing teacher rating of the overall attractiveness of the job.

Other researchers have investigated teacher reactions to job attributes depicted in formal position advertisements (Winter, 1996), recruitment brochures (Winter & Dunaway, 19997), and recruitment videos (Young, Rinehart, & Heneman, 1993; Young et al., 1997). Job attributes have been shown to interact with applicant characteristics to influence teacher reactions to vacant positions as depicted in recruitment messages. Winter (1996) found that, when role playing applicants reading a position advertisement for an elementary teaching position, males reacted more favorably than females to jobs with extrinsic job attributes (e.g., job security) whereas females reacted more favorably than males to jobs with intrinsic attributes (e.g., sense of accomplishment).

JOB ATTRIBUTES

Studies about the principalship have addressed job attributes described in the literature as management job attributes and instructional leadership job attributes. Cuban (1988) recounted the history the two job orientations (principal-as-manager, principal-as-instructional-leader) from 1850 to 1988. The principal-as-manager work orientation "dominated for a century and a half the reported behavior of principals and persists today in the minds of both principals and non-principals" (p. 57). Greenfield (1995) specified the managerial and instructional job attributes of principalship: (a) principals, as managers, engage in activities such as scheduling students and teachers and coordinating procedures and activities; (b) principals, as instructional leaders, determine curriculum content and objectives, evaluate student learning, and create a climate for instruction.

Using structured observations, researchers (Kmetz & Willower, 1982; Martin & Willower, 1981) detected an interaction between the primary work orientation of the principal and principal job assignment level. Elementary and secondary principals spent equal amounts of time in management activities (38.6% and 36.5%

respectively). Elementary principals spent significantly more time engaged in instructional leadership work behaviors (27.1%) than did high school principals (17.4%).

The managerial-instructional leadership dichotomy appears, also, in the school reform literature. Conley and Bacharach (1990) stated that some principals in restructured schools adopt a managerial work orientation because permitting teachers to have control in the face of uncertainty "is diametrically opposed to [the principal's] desire for centralized control and coordination" (p. 540). Other researchers (Wohlstetter, et al., 1994) suggest that some principals assume a managerial job orientation to prevent teachers from becoming overly involved with non-instructional decisions.

A study by Winter and Dunaway (1997) indicating that an interaction between job attributes (management, instructional leadership) and teacher school level (elementary school, middle school, high school) influence teacher ratings of the job of principal is especially germane to the present research. Elementary and middle school teachers responded more positively when descriptions of the job of principal emphasized instructional leadership job attributes. High school teachers responded more positively when descriptions of the job of principal emphasized management job attributes.

PRINCIPAL COUNCIL ROLE

Although teacher reactions to the role of the principal on the school council has yet to be examined, empirically, relative to possible effects on the attraction of teachers to school council jobs, descriptive studies about site-based decision making suggest that principals may influence teacher job attraction in the school council context. Malen, Ogawa, and Krantz, (1990) observed that principals are the most influential members of most school councils (e.g.,). David (1994) found that (a) principals determined the style of operation of most school councils, (b) teacher members of councils chaired by principals perceived as authoritarian felt powerless,

and (c) middle and high school teachers were more likely to perceive the principal, as council chair, as authoritarian.

HYPOTHESES

This research is exploratory in nature because the present experiment was the first to examine, empirically, the effects of job attributes, principal role, and teacher job assignment level (independent variables) on teacher job ratings (dependent variable) for mandated school council jobs, The exploratory nature of the study, and the three-way ANOVA design specified for data analysis, resulted in the formulation of seven null hypotheses. The main null hypotheses were: (a) there is no difference in teacher rating of a school council member job description associated with job attributes (management, instructional leadership); (b) there is no difference in teacher rating of a school council member job description associated with principal school council role (chair, member); and (c) there is no difference in teacher rating of a school council member job description associated with teacher job assignment level (elementary school, middle school, high school). Four other null hypotheses tested for group differences in teacher ratings of the job associated with the two-way and three-way interactions among the independent variables.

METHOD

Experienced public school teachers (N = 168) read content-validated school council member job descriptions and made simulated decisions regarding their likelihood of pursuing the job. The research design was a 2 x 2 x 3 completely crossed, fixed-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) design with 12 treatment conditions having equal cell sizes (n = 14). The independent variables were job attributes, principal council role, and teacher job assignment level. The dependent variable was teacher rating of the job of school council member.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE AND STUDY PARTICIPANTS

The focal population was all certified school teachers enrolled in graduate education courses at three major state universities in Kentucky. The study participants role-played teachers considering whether or not to pursue a job to serve

on the local school council. The participants were selected at random from a large pool of teachers and assigned randomly to treatment conditions. Following scripted procedures conducted in an experimental setting, the participants completed a biographical data form, reviewed a job description for a vacant teacher position on the local school council, and used Likert-type scales to evaluate the school council job as depicted in a formal job description.

The role-playing exercise was internally valid because, at the time of the study, school council members governed over 93% of Kentucky public schools (Lindle, 1997) and all certified teachers employed in Kentucky public schools governed by members of school councils were eligible to pursue a vacant school council position. The participants evaluated a job with which they were familiar since many had either served on a school council or were serving on a school council at the time of the study.

A power analysis, conducted according to procedures explicated by Cohen (1988), served as the basis for determining the sample size for this research. The specifications for the power analysis included: (a) a desired minimum effect size (omega-square = .06); (b) a defined level of significance (alpha = .05); and (c) a specified power level (power = .80). The sample included 56 elementary school teachers, 56 middle school teachers, and 56 high school teachers representing diverse school locations ($\underline{n}$ = 59 rural, $\underline{n}$ = 49 urban, $\underline{n}$ = 60 suburban). The participants reflected the national profile of teachers (National Center for Education Statistics, 1997) in terms of: (a) personal characteristics (mean age = 34.4 years, mean teaching experience = 6.2 years); (b) ethnicity (10% minority, 90% White); and (c) gender (73% female, 27% male). Descriptive data for the study participants appear in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

INDEPENDENT VARIABLES

The independent variables examined in this study were job attributes,

principal role on the school council, and teacher job assignment level. Study participants provided self-reports of their current job assignment level on the biographical data instrument. The job description instruments served to operationalize the council job attributes and the principal role on the council. Each version of the job description depicted the principal as being either the chair of the council or a member of the council with a teacher serving as chair of the council. Both options were externally valid because principals in Kentucky have served as either the chair or a member of Kentucky school councils since 1993.

Operationalization of school council job attributes proceeded according to a content validity procedure recommended by Anastasi (1976). The six-step validation procedure involved (a) conducting a literature review to identify job attributes associated with the management and instructional leadership dimensions of school administration; (b) identifying job attributes specified in the operant reform legislation (Kentucky Revised Statute [K.R.S.] § 160.345); (c) having a panel of experts Q-sort the job attribute into management and instructional leadership content domains; (d) having a pilot group ($\underline{N}$ = 24) rate job attribute importance; (e) pairing of the rated job attributes to create categories of attributes having equivalent strength; and (f) computing Tilton's overlap statistic to make a final selection of the attribute pairs used to write content validated school council job descriptions (decisional criterion = 90% overlap).

A review of the educational administration literature addressing attributes of the job of principalship (e.g., Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan, & Lee, 1982; Cuban, 1988; Greenfield, 1995; Hallinger & Heck, 1996; Murphy, 1992) provided operational definitions for management job attributes and instructional leadership job attributes associated with school administration. Job attributes associated with management focus on planning, coordinating, and controlling the operation of the school (e.g., control of fiscal and human resources), while job attributes associated with instructional leadership focus on teaching and learning (e.g., providing leadership for curriculum and development).

An analysis of school reform legislation operant in Kentucky (K.R.S. § 160.345) identified 45 discrete job duties formally specified as the responsibilities of school councils. The 45 job duties identified for analysis were transferred to the row vector of a cross-impact matrix sorting instrument with column vectors entitled Management, Instruction, and Do Not Know. Using the operational definitions derived from the literature and the cross impact matrix, a panel of experts categorized the job attributes by content domain. Job attributes categorized with a high level of agreement were transferred to a rating instrument containing 5-point Likert-type scales for each job attribute (1 = Not at all Important; 5 = Extremely Important). The pilot group rated each job attribute for importance relative to school administration.

The rated job attributes were ranked according to mean rating and paired (i.e., management attribute with highest mean score paired with instruction attribute with the highest mean score, and so forth). Calculation of an overlap statistic developed by Tilton (1937) and recommended by Dunnette (1966) established equivalency for each pair of job attributes. The overlap percentages for job attributes used in the actual study ranged from 94% to 99%.

The job descriptions consisted of three paragraphs. Paragraph one contained general information held constant across all job descriptions. Paragraph two depicted the job with either management job attributes or the instructional leadership job attributes. Paragraph three indicated that either the principal or another teacher was chair of the school council.

Public school teachers (N = 18) participated in a pilot study to check manipulation of the active independent variables (job attributes, principal council role) and to assess reliability of the composite rating serving as the dependent variable. Because participant responses to a two-item questionnaire indicated that the participants perceived the experimental manipulations as intended, the job descriptions were adopted for use in the actual study. Results of the reliability assessment appear in the next section.

DEPENDENT VARIABLE

The dependent variable, teacher rating of a school council job, was an additive composite score composed of two items with 5-point Likert-type scales (5 = most favorable): (a) "How likely would you be to pursue the job of school council member described?"; and (b) "How likely would you be to run for the job of school council member if nominated by other teachers?". The coefficient alpha (.90) for the two items exceeded the minimum recommended for use in statistical analysis (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). In the actual study, the two evaluation items were counterbalanced using procedures recommended by Keppel (1991) to minimize error attributable to order effects.

RESULTS

The mean participant ratings for the two items forming the composite score were below the midpoint of 3 on the 5-point Likert-type scales. This finding suggests that the attraction of teachers to a content-validated description of the job of school council member is low-to-moderate at best. A summary of cell means and standard deviations appears in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

The results of the ANOVA procedure appear in Table 3. At the specified alpha level of .05, there was a significant job attributes by principal council role interaction effect [F (1, 156) = 4.16, $p < .05$].

Insert Table 3 about here

Analysis of the simple effects for principal council role at each level of job attributes identified the precise mean differences contributing to the interaction effect. When the principal served as a council member with a teacher serving as chair, the simple effects for principal council role were not significant [F (1, 82) = .02,

$p > .05$]. However, when the principal served as council chair, the simple effects were significant [F (1, 82) = 7.9, $p < .01$].

Insert Figure 1 about here

The disordinal interaction depicted in Figure 1 demonstrates the lack of significant group differences in participant job ratings, across levels of job attributes, when the job description depicted a teacher as council chair. However, when the job description depicted the principal as council chair, teachers rated the job description emphasizing instructional leadership job duties (M = 6.09) significantly higher than the job description emphasizing management job duties (M = 4.69).

DISCUSSION

The low-to-moderate teacher ratings detected in this research suggest that enthusiasm for school council service among randomly selected Kentucky teachers may not be sufficient to generate optimal pools of candidates who are attracted to the job of school council member. A possible explanation for the low-to-moderate ratings is that the job of serving on a school council requires teachers to assume job duties beyond their traditional classroom role. Despite the additional responsibilities and time required by school council service, the jobs described in this investigation did not include incentives or rewards for teachers serving on school councils.

Participating teachers preferred school council jobs emphasizing instructional leadership when the principal served as the council chair but teachers did not vary in their job preferences when a teacher served as the council chair. These findings may reflect the administrator certification standards (Kentucky Education Professional Standards Board, 1994) operant in Kentucky during the data collection phase of this research. The administrator certification standards specifies that the principal is the instructional leader of the school. As noted earlier, the principal must serve as council chair unless exempted by a waiver procedure.

Teachers may have rated job descriptions depicting principals as chairs of councils emphasizing management job duties less positively to avoid conflicts that sometimes arise when teachers make decisions in areas allocated, traditionally, to principals. Historically, school principals have had almost exclusive authority for making managerial decisions about issues such as funding and school assets. Teachers may be reluctant to make decisions that challenge, directly, the traditional managerial authority of principals.

IMPLICATIONS/LIMITATIONS/CONCLUSION

The results of this study have implications for recruitment theory, future research, and administrative practice in schools undergoing systemic reform. There are also limitations that should be considered before generalizing the findings to other reform settings.

RECRUITMENT THEORY

The study findings support the utility of using the Rynes and Barber Applicant Attraction Model (1990) as a theoretical framework for investigations about teacher attraction to positions on school councils. Consistent with the Rynes and Barber model, teacher job ratings according to the content of the recruitment message presented. Educational researchers should use the model to frame studies investigating other job attributes and organization characteristics that may influence teacher reactions to recruitment practices for school council membership.

In future studies, attributes of a school council job could be differentiated across the different administrative functions of the job (e.g., personnel management, public relations, finance and budgeting, professional development). Future studies may also examine organization variables that may influence teacher attraction to vacant positions on school councils (e.g., source of the recruitment message, timing of the vacancy announcement). Teacher ratings of the job may differ depending on who (teacher, principal, other official) announces the position vacancy and the timing of the position announcement (i.e., before, during, or after the school year).

Finally, the present research focused exclusively on teacher members of school councils. Future research should address the role of all potential school council members including parents. The results of the proposed future empirical studies may enable recruitment researchers to extend the Rynes and Barber (1990) model to contexts involving internal as well as external recruitment.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICE

The practical implications of this study relate to how teachers are recruited to serve on school councils and what policies are established to attract teachers to the job. School officials can use the findings as an aid for designing and implementing such school council recruitment practices as job descriptions and position announcements. The results of this investigation suggest that school council recruitment messages targeting teachers are most effective if the recruitment messages emphasizes instructional leadership aspects of the job and the school principal serves as the council chair.

From a policy perspective, there are potential rewards that could be offered to teachers in return for assuming a school council job. For some teachers, intrinsic rewards (e.g., more control over the work environment) may make the job more attractive. For other teachers, extrinsic rewards (e.g., stipends for attending council training) may increase teacher attraction to the job. In the future, intrinsic and extrinsic rewards should be examined to determine their effects on teacher attraction to school council service.

LIMITATIONS

The present study is subject to limitations related to the research site, the sampling procedure, and the research design. The study participants were from a single Midwestern state undergoing systemic school reform. Individuals from other geographical locations might have reacted differently to the focal recruitment practice (school council job description) than did participants in this study. The research sample consisted of teachers selected at random from the population of teachers enrolled in education courses at three large state universities. Accordingly,

the results of this study should be generalized only to this population, or to other populations with similar characteristics located in the same geographical region. Also, the participants in the present research reacted to a recruitment practice under simulated conditions according to a role playing protocol. It is possible that teachers reacting to school council job descriptions under actual internal recruitment conditions might have reacted differently than did the participants in this investigation. Finally, this research is limited by current recruitment theory. The task remains to extend existing recruitment theory to better accommodate the unique personnel and attraction conditions that derive from school reform legislation.

CONCLUSION

This study contributes to the emerging body of research that addresses, empirically, the nature and degree of teacher attraction to jobs that cast teachers in the role of school leader and policy maker. It is hoped that the knowledge uncovered in this study will increase interest in researching teacher job attraction relative to school councils. The national trend towards school-based decision making, and the resulting requirement that teachers serve on school councils, highlight the need for new knowledge about teacher job attraction in site-based management settings. The authority and empowerment that reform initiatives accord to teachers are more likely to contribute to improved student outcomes if teachers are attracted to the emerging teacher leadership roles.

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Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Study Participants

Variable	Mean	SD	Range
Age (Years)	34.4	7.6	24 - 56
Gender	(a)	(a)	(a)
Race	(b)	(b)	(b)
Number of Dependent Children	.9	1.1	0 - 4
School Enrollment (Approx.)	769.6	409.9	120 - 2175
Teaching Experience (Years)	6.2	5.4	1 - 27
Number of Districts in Which You Have Taught	1.5	1.0	1 - 10
Participants at Each School Level	(c)	(c)	(c)

N = 168

(a) Female = 123, Male = 45

(b) Black = 13, White = 151, Hispanic = 1, Other = 3

(c) Elementary School (n = 56), Middle School (n = 56), Secondary School (n = 56)

Table 2

Summary of Cell Means and Standard Deviations for Ratings of Jobs Varied by Principal Role, School Level, and Job Attributes

Prin. Role:		CHAIR			MEMBER		
Sch. Level:		Elem	Middle	High	Elem	Middle	High
Attributes:							
Mgmt.	M	4.86	4.14	5.07	5.36	5.29	5.43
	SD	2.21	2.07	2.13	2.76	2.55	1.91
Instr.	M	6.64	5.43	6.21	5.64	5.29	4.93
	SD	2.76	2.03	2.52	2.30	2.16	2.53

Note. The independent variables are Principal Role on the School Council (chair, member), School Level (elementary school, middle school, high school), and Countil Job Attributes (management, instructional leadership). Means and standard deviations are based on two-item additive composite scores.

Coefficient Alpha = .90

N = 168

n=14

Table 3

Analysis of Variance for Applicant Reaction by Job Attributes, Principal Council Role, and Teacher School Level

Source	df	SS	MS	F
Attributes	1	18.67	18.67	3.40
Role	1	.21	.21	.04
Level	2	9.96	4.98	.91
Attributes x Role	1	22.88	22.88	4.16* (a)
Attributes x Level	2	3.58	1.79	.33
Role x Level	2	7.18	3.59	.65
Attributes x Role x Level	2	.23	.11	.02
Error	156	857.85	5.50	
Total	167	920.57		

Coefficient Alpha for Two-Item Composite Score = .90

*$p < .05$

(a) Omega-Squared = .02

Figure 1. Interaction of Job Attributes by Principal Council Role